

WAGT Community Service Accomplishments

Local News

A total of 18.5 hours per week is devoted to live local news programming. WAGT broadcasts live local news programs weekdays 5:00am to 7:00am and weeknights at 6:00pm and 11:00pm. Saturday and Sunday nights WAGT provides news programs at 11:00pm. 7 nights per week at 10:00pm, WAGT provides a live local news program which is broadcast on WBEK 16 and also available on 3 cable systems serving the Augusta Georgia and Aiken South Carolina communities. Our website, WAGT.com features local news information. The site is updated throughout the day and night with current news content. WAGT.com features streaming video of top local news stories and also current weather conditions.

Local Public Affairs

WAGT supports the Augusta chapters of the United Way and the Red Cross. Our General Manager John Mann sits on both boards. We air public service announcements to publicize events for each organization. In June 2004, WAGT Co Sponsored "Hot Southern Night", a rock and country music concert held at a local baseball stadium. Over \$62,000 was raised for the Augusta Red Cross. This was the most successful fundraiser in Augusta Red Cross history. In 2003, WAGT created a public service campaign for the United Way entitled "I am the United Way". Residents of the community who benefit from the United Way were featured on-camera telling their story and how the United Way raised the quality of their life. Announcements aired on WAGT in a heavy rotation prior to the United Way's kickoff campaign to raise donations in 2003 and 2004. Donation goals were exceeded for that collection period.

WAGT also promotes and sponsors "Light the Night", an annual fundraiser for the Leukemia Lymphoma Society. A heavy public service announcement schedule of 30 spots per week airs for two weeks prior to the evening event. 2004's event, held in October, was the most successful fundraiser in the organization's history.

Program preemptions

Saturday, June 21, 2003 WAGT chose not to air the NBC Special "Maxim's Hot 100" because of questionable content. The program featured photographers prepping and photographing models wearing revealing bathing suits. Due to the 9:00pm time period in which NBC offered the program, WAGT chose not to air it and substituted the syndicated "Home Improvement" in its place. In May of 2003, WAGT previewed NBC/Bravo's "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" and deemed it unfit for broadcast at 9:00pm. The 9:00pm time period followed NBC's "Fear Factor" with a known popularity among teenagers. The program contained many excretory references at a time when children were likely to be in the audience. WAGT chose to tape delay the program and air it overnight at 2:00am. The syndicated "Home Improvement" aired in the 9:00pm time period.

Emergency Programming

WAGT employs 3 meteorologists in a full time capacity. In the event of dangerous weather conditions, WAGT breaks in and preempts programming in order to inform viewers of the conditions. Saturday, May 3, 2003, WAGT preempted over 2 hours of NBC prime time programming to report on a series of 5 tornadoes coming through our viewing area. WAGT normally signs off the air at 2:00am Sunday morning but elected to stay on the air with live coverage until 5:00am, when the danger had passed.

Political Programming

At election time, WAGT broadcasts an ongoing news feature series entitled "Ad Watch". Our News Department researches and analyzes political ads placed by candidates which air on WAGT for factuality, then reports those findings on all local newscasts.

Community Service accomplishments

Base Realignment and Closure Authorization - BRAC

In the summer of 2003, WAGT became aware of efforts by the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) Alliance citizen's group to fend off the possible realignment or closing of Augusta's Fort Gordon in May of 2005. If the Fort were closed, over 17,000 (seventeen thousand) jobs would be lost which contribute over \$1,000,000,000 (one billion dollars) annually to the economy of the CSRA. WAGT became involved with the group by establish the Media Alliance to Save Ft Gordon, creating and producing a series of television and radio public announcements to educate the local community to the negative impact that losing Fort Gordon would have on our local economy. The first announcements featured CSRA Alliance President Larry DeMeyers and U.S. Congressman Charlie Norwood explaining the devastating economic effects that base closure would have on the CSRA. Television and radio announcements were produced and distributed to all local broadcasters by WAGT free of charge. WAGT financed and hosted an event for local broadcasters to present the announcements to them and get the broadcast community behind the efforts of the CSRA Alliance. The announcements were aired not only by WAGT but other broadcasters throughout the fall of 2003 and spring of 2004. Another series of announcements entitled "Five for the Fort" was created and produced pro bono by WAGT in April of 2004 and broadcast by WAGT and others in the media until August of 2004.

The original fund raising goal of the CSRA Alliance was \$1,200,000. As of August of 2004, over \$1,700,000 dollars has been raised, besting the original goal by \$500,000.

Riverblast

WAGT's Riverblast was created in 2003 in order to encourage diversity in the CSRA and provide a free, family-oriented venue for people attending the annual July 4th fireworks show over Augusta's Savannah River. The entire downtown Augusta Common is filled with free rides and games for toddlers to teens. Admission is free and all rides and games are free. WAGT allows no alcohol to be sold or consumed in the Augusta Common. The event is heavily promoted on WAGT and also by local radio partner Clear Channel.

Holidayfest

WAGT's Holidayfest is a similar event to Riverblast which is held in December of each year on the same day as Augusta's Broad Street Christmas Parade. The Augusta Common is the "Alcohol Free Family Fun Zone" and is filled with free rides and games for children.

The Augusta Training Shop for the Handicapped

WAGT sponsors "Derby Day" each May on the day of the Kentucky Derby broadcast. It is an outside event held at the Augusta Riding Center which features music, food and beverage. The day ends with the NBC broadcast of the Kentucky Derby available for patrons to view on large screen televisions. Entry to the event is by paid ticket with and all proceeds are donated to the Augusta Training Shop

for the Handicapped. The Training Shop provides work space for handicapped people to restore furniture for profit. Enough money was raised in 2003 to allow the Training Shop to purchase land for a new facility for their workers. In the spring of 2002, WAGT produced a public service announcement which advertised the retail service provided by the Training Shop. The PSA ran an average of 20 times per week in 2002 and dramatically increased the amount of work the Training Shop accomplished and as a result, the amount of money made by the Shop.

Florida Hurricane Water Drive

August 2004 saw much devastation in the state of Florida due to hurricanes. After hurricane Charlie struck on August 12th, WAGT organized the Augusta community to collect money and bottled water for Florida residents. Public service announcements were created asking for donations and the WAGT studios served as a collection point for them. WAGT's efforts gathered over \$3,000 in monetary donations and collected six truckloads of bottled water. The Augusta Fire Department provided the transport and the money and water was delivered to Avon Park Florida and distributed to needy residents.

Salvation Army Coat Drive

This annual November / December event collects coats from the public which are donated to the Salvation Army for free distribution to the needy. 20 Public Service Announcements are aired per week by WAGT which encourage viewers to donate coats with WAGT studio being a drop-off point. In 2003, over 1,500 coats were collected and distributed.

Salvation Army Auto Auction

This event occurs several times a year when the Salvation Army auctions donated automobiles and boats. WAGT designed a public service announcement styled like a used car advertisement which airs an average of 30 times per week prior to each auction. Since WAGT started airing the announcements, sales at each auction have doubled and this event has turned into one of the major fundraising opportunities for the Salvation Army.

The Imperial Theatre

The Imperial Theatre is located in downtown Augusta. Built in 1917, the Theatre is now operated as a non-profit 501(c) (3) institution exclusively for charitable, literary and educational purposes. Music and theatrical performances held there are supported by WAGT by airing 15 public service announcements per week promoting the events. WAGT Operations Manager Don Mathews serves on the Theatre's Board of Directors.

The Augusta Richmond County Human Relations Commission

The Human Relations Commission requested help from WAGT in September of 2004 in the preparation of a series of 9 Radio public service announcements. WAGT contributed audio production facilities to add a local message to the pre-produced radio announcements. Following production, WAGT electronically delivered the announcements to every Radio station in the Augusta area.